



NEWS RELEASE

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Public hearings scheduled on millage rate adoption— Rate to remain the same, tax increase announced due to non-rollback

As required by law, the Gwinnett County Board of Education (GCBOE) will hold three public hearings as part of its process for setting the millage rate. The first hearing will be held on August 4 at 6 p.m. The second and third public hearings will take place on August 11 at 11:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. All of the public hearings are scheduled to take place in the Board Room at the J. Alvin Wilbanks Instructional Support Center, located at 437 Old Peachtree Road NW in Suwanee.

The school system's Fiscal Year 2021 (FY2021) budget was adopted July 16, 2020. In setting the millage rate to support the FY2021 budget, the School Board is looking to maintain the current total school millage rate of 21.60.

The budget provides resources—both financial and human—to help the school system accommodate its growing student population. Gwinnett County Public Schools' enrollment is expected to grow by more than 670 students, bringing the total projected enrollment for next school year to more than 181,200 students.

Total FY2021 state revenue will decrease largely due to an austerity reduction in excess of \$100 million applied to the GCPS's Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula earnings. This austerity reduction is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's negative impact on state revenues. Local revenue is budgeted to increase primarily due to a projected net growth in the property tax digest.

All of the local revenue projected for FY2021 is needed to fund the projected student enrollment growth, provide step increases for eligible teachers and other school system employees, and to help offset the impact of the QBE austerity reduction.

In order to keep the local tax digest current, the Gwinnett County Tax Assessor's Office conducts annual property value updates (reassessments) on a rotating basis. By state law, local taxing authorities, such as GCBOE, must either keep their tax collections revenue-neutral (by decreasing the millage rate to offset the gained taxes from the property value updates) or announce a tax increase (even though the actual millage rate is not increasing). The Board is considering adopting a combined millage rate of 21.60, a rate unchanged from FY2020. The total millage will still generate more revenue for FY2021, requiring the announcement of a proposed property tax increase.

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The Mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools
is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

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However, taxpayers whose property values have not increased due to reassessment will see no increase in their school tax bill.

The total school millage rate is made up of two portions— the maintenance and operations (M&O) millage and the debt-service millage. Funds generated by the M&O millage pay for the day-to-day operations of the school system. The debt-service millage is used to pay down the School Board's long-term debt from bond referenda passed over the years to pay for school construction.

The M&O millage is recommended to remain at 19.70 mills and the debt-service rate is recommended to remain unchanged at 1.90. This will result in a total recommended millage rate of 21.60 mills.

Citizens may address the Gwinnett County Board of Education at any of the three public hearings. A sign-up sheet will be available at the hearings for those wishing to speak. There is no need to sign up in advance of the meeting date.

A copy of the budget is available for public review on the school system's website at www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us or through the school system's Budget Department. For information, call 678-301-6200.

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